



# Hon. Robert T. Matsui

## Member of Congress

[www.house.gov/matsui/](http://www.house.gov/matsui/)

*Robert T. Matsui*

Serving California's 5th District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Friday, June 13, 2003

CONTACT: JARED ALLEN  
(202) 225-7163/(202) 225-0564

## MATSUI: BUSH MUST SUPPORT ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC—Citing the need to stand united behind Israel as terrorist strikes continue to threaten the peace process, Congressman Robert T. Matsui (D-CA) and 33 House Democrats today sent a letter to the White House strongly urging President Bush to show unwavering support for Israel's right to defend itself from further acts of violence.

"We were deeply dismayed to hear your criticism of Israel for fighting acts of terror. The attack on Hamas leader Abdel Rantisi was clearly justified as an application of Israel's right to self-defense. Indeed, just as the United States has the right to prosecute the war on terrorism, Israel has the same right to fight terrorism in its own neighborhood and its own capital," the letter read.

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Caucus Chair Robert Menendez (D-NJ), House International Relations Committee Ranking Member Tom Lantos (D-CA), and Representatives Henry A. Waxman (D-CA), Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL), Martin Frost (D-TX), Joseph Crowley (D-NY), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Nita M. Lowey (D-NY), Eliot Engel (D-NY), Artur Davis (D-AL), Chris Bell (D-TX), Michael McNulty (D-NY), Max A. Sandlin, Jr. (D-TX), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Ike Skelton (D-MO), John Lewis (D-GA), Mike Ross (D-AR), Anthony D. Weiner (D-NY), Steve Israel (D-NY), Lincoln Davis (D-TN), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Robert E. Andrews (D-NJ), Gary L. Ackerman (D-NY), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Denise Majette (D-GA), Peter Deutsch (D-FL), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Shelley Berkley (D-NV), and Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) joined Matsui in signing the letter.

The full text of the letter is below:

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, Wednesday's suicide bombing in Israel resulted in the tragic loss of 17 innocent lives and the injury of more than 60 people. As the violence continues, even in the face of efforts by all sides to bring peace to the region, the United States must show nothing short of steadfast support for Israel as it continues to bear the entire burden of ending the violence.

-- more --

We were deeply dismayed to hear your criticism of Israel for fighting acts of terror. The attack on Hamas leader Abdel Rantisi was clearly justified as an application of Israel's right to self-defense. Indeed, just as the United States has the right to prosecute the war on terrorism, Israel has the same right to fight terrorism in its own neighborhood and its own capital.

Rantisi, a senior leader of Hamas, proudly claims "credit" for suicide bombings and opposes the proposed cease-fire with Israel -- advocated by Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. Interrogation of Hamas operatives has indicated that Rantisi directs Hamas terrorist policy. Rantisi's public statements serve as instructions for terrorists to carry out attacks. As quoted on the Hamas website, Rantisi called for stepping up strikes against the "Zionist enemy" in order to create a balance of deterrence and to bring about the expulsion of Israelis. On June 10, 2003, Rantisi said Hamas will "not leave one Jew in Palestine. We will fight them with all the strength we have. This is our land, not the Jews." For Rantisi and Hamas, their terrorism is not about "occupation," but rather about achieving their self-proclaimed goal of the elimination of Israel. It is clear that Rantisi is not only working to undermine Abbas, but also to derail any chance of the roadmap's success.

The U.S. and Israel both agree that Abbas is the legitimate alternative to Yassir Arafat as leader of the Palestinian people. Thus far, Abbas has said the right things regarding ending terror both on moral and political grounds. However, Abbas has stated repeatedly that he is not willing to use force to control and dismantle terrorist organizations that operate freely in Palestinian territories. As long as Palestinian leaders do not aggressively go after the terrorist infrastructure, the Israeli government has the sole responsibility of protecting its citizens against further terrorist attacks. If the Palestinian Authority does not act against terrorism, Israel must.

The people of Israel are confronted with the grim realities of terrorism on a daily basis. Yet the darker reality is that were it not for the successful actions Israel takes in defense of its people, terrorism against them would increase tenfold. As Israel embarks on the difficult path to peace, it is essential that her efforts to quell acts of senseless terror have the full support of the United States.

###